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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the role and training needs of school leaders and then describes the rationale and basic design of a two-year Swedish program for training school leaders. The first half of the paper presents a democratic view of modern educational leadership and then examines the implications of that view for the design of training programs for educational leaders. The second half of the paper illustrates the author's recommended training approach by discussing the PLUS program for training school leaders, which was adopted by the Swedish government in 1976. (JG)

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THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LEADER AND A TRAINING PROGRAMME

by

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1. THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LEADER

The object of this symposium is "to identify the major problems in educational administration and management and to try out various ways and ideas of how to solve them". This seems to me essentially a question of how to develop the activities of a school in order to accomplish the goals to a higher degree.

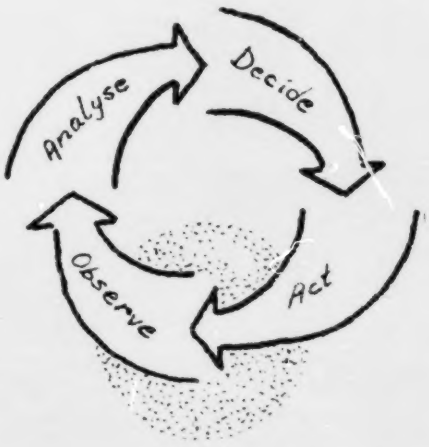
Out of the ambition to develop each separate school the need arises to seek a comprehensive view on school activity as a whole. All those disparate phenomena and events which together take up an ordinary day at school should be synthezised. This will make it possible to observe and more adequately work upon various features within the activities of school.

Such a comprehensive view is based upon knowledge of factors interacting in forming the conditions of school activities; factors such as the objects of school, the people at school, the regulations and the environment.

The comprehensive view focuses on the need for capacity and willingness of the members of the school not only in carrying out the administrative functions but also in furthering the development of their own work.

This implies that one must observe one's own activities, analyse such observations, consider alternative courses of action, then make a choice and act accordingly.

In a democratic school system this should not be the leader's sole responsibility. A social organization like school should allow its own members as well as the surrounding society to take part in each developmental phase



of its work.
That is why it must be of utmost importance to map out the function of leader of a school of today as a basis for studies of making and carrying out decisions within the work of school.

The function of leader

The organization of a school may be conceived as comparatively static. The task of the leader will be to continuously refine the routines of the inner activities aiming at increased efficiency. One might on the other hand have a different fundamental conception of the activities of a school. According to this point of view, the organization is formed by the people working within it. The irrational and variable nature of man makes the organization dynamic. The task of the leader will, to a great extent, become that of a coordinator. Each leadership in the school world must be affected by these two views.

A leadership is multidimensional. One dimension concerns the technical knowledge and abilities of the leader to elaborate the tasks with which the leader is confronted. Another dimension concerns the ability of the leader to cooperate with all those who participate in - or should be participating - in the elaboration of the tasks.

A modern leadership should be democratic. This is obtained through a combination of a capacity as an instrumental leader and a great amount of interaction with other members of the organization. But for a leadership within the public sector yet another dimension is required. The leadership must in some way guarantee that the activity conforms with the expectations and intentions of society.
A democratic leadership in school, thus, implies that he leader should stimulate a systematic development of his own school and also that this should take place in interaction with the members of the school and that the development should be in accordance with the goals of society for the activity of school.

Leaders on various levels and within various activities will in the future be forced to handle changes more frequently than has hitherto been the case. It might be changes desired in order to obtain the goals set up for a certain activity. It might be changes forced upon a school activity by external circumstances. Such changes may sometimes occur rapidly and surprisingly and sometimes develop step by step. But they always make claims on an organization and its leader as for readiness to meet the change and turn it into a positive direction.

Changes might be the result of altered values which implicate that people want a greater responsibility for their work and an increased influence upon their doings. Changes might be based on the expansion of our knowledge of man. This means that the leadership must be based on an increased consideration for the needs of the individual, a consideration in which the interaction between people will play an essential part.

Rapid, surprising and substantial changes affecting the individual organization and its leadership often arise from lack of resources and fluctuations in the social economy.

Furthermore one has to reckon with changes in the demands on leadership due to an increase in the volume and speed of communications within the organizations. A capacity for teamwork will also become a necessary prerequisite when treating complicated problems. Such a teamwork implicates a belief that human resources can be used and developed when they really are required.

The roles of the leader as well of the staff will thus be changed by transferring, to a certain extent, tasks and responsibility from the leader to the members of the team. The main task of the leader will thus be to keep the activities together, to mediate and to represent the organization. The leadership will be based on competence as well as on the support and confidence of the other members of the team.

The relations of the leader to his co-workers

Democracy means certain claims on the relations between people in a community. Such relations characterized by tolerance, cooperation and equality should be strived for in the formal exercise of power as well as in the informal situations of everyday work. The people involved must realize that these relations concern the decisive power and the executive power.

When it comes to the executive power it is essential to consider the question of the origin of the power. Is it conferred by the people over whom it is exercised? Is it conferred by others who ultimately will protect their own interests or by those who actually protect the people over whom the power is exercised. Or is the power self-conferred? The critical questions of the decisive power are: Who prepares the decisions? Who makes the decisions? Who is responsible for the decision?

The everyday life of school can be summarized in four steps

The initial step: Here the degree of democracy is obvious from the way of estimating proposals and taking initiatives and also from the way of determining the goals

The planning step: Democracy affects the organization of work and is reflected in the carrying out of things such as the delegation of responsibility and the settling of agreements.

The executive step: Democracy leads to an execution which in every phase is formed with respect to and in defence to the interests of the parties concerned.

The following-up step: Who supervises what happens, who analyses what has happened and who decides about the combinations are key questions, the answers of which determine the actual degree of democracy within the organization.

Democracy can never be confined only to techniques of decisionmaking.

The need for technical knowledge in the leader

The leaders of school should of course have a good knowledge of administrative techniques and routines. One must, however, be conscious of the fact that the essential tasks of the leader within the activity of the school involve the confrontation with new problems which mostly cannot be solved by means of earlier routines but require innovative efforts.

Of course the school leaders should be able to apply planning techniques and administrative methods relevant to their proper field and also to continuously adjust the working procedures to a functional interplay for the benefit of the comprehensive goals of school.

Leadership within school and outside of school has much in common. This is true not least of the responsibility for management and administration. Thus, the leaders of school will meet routines and techniques for the administrative leadership in the public sector and in the trade and industry of the surrounding society. By continuous observations in society and by a creative elaboration of their observations the leaders of school will develop their administrative leadership most efficiently. The adaptation of various administrative systems to the needs of school can thus not be generalized but needs to be adjusted to the activity of each school in accordance with the current situation.

The declaration of the complex nature of leadership provided above is brought to the fore when planning education for school leaders. When planning a training programme, a discussion of the following questions is relevant.

Should the training be individually-oriented or work-oriented?

Traditional training of leaders has often considered its task to be that of making the leader the subject of his activity. Naturally, it is possible to get knowledge, skills and attitudes by theoretical studies which can be of use on exercising a leadership. But one does not grow into a leader only through theoretical studies. Such a development is achieved by doing practical work as a leader. That is why there exists nowaday a conscious effort to discuss the development of activities or organizations rather than the training of leaders. The training must deliberately, by means of various techniques, refrain from increasing the chances of the leader to exert authoritarian power on the activities led by him/her. The training must instead be oriented towards conferring a different form of power on the leader: i. e. possibility, will and capacity for a development of activities together with the co-workers. The training of leaders cannot be viewed as "an isolated phenomenon for an originally well-defined group".

A work-oriented training of leaders is not necessarily opposed to the conventional one which is individually oriented even if such ideas have occurred in recent discussion. All the training of leaders, both that focused on activity and that concerned with the individual is justified if it leads to one goal: the increased goal fulfillment of the organization.
The individually-oriented training of leaders which can become a possible alternative for us may be given two different directions. It might be directed towards increasing the administrative capabilities of the school leader. It may on the other hand aim at increasing the preparedness of the school leader for handling the problems of everyday life.

Should the training be aiming at a schoolleader as an executor or a problem solver?

To-day we have hardly anybody who is prepared to lead the process of inner innovation in our educational system. We have administrators managing the funds at our disposal; supervising existing regulations and controling that routine work runs as well as possible.

School leaders function as executors. But it is important to differentiate between administrators-executors and real leaders.

The school leader often turns to his own bookshelves and their ever increasing collection of laws, provisions, regulations and directions, when seeking a model for his actions, without any attempts of his own to interpret them. However, an organisation is developed only when its members discover that the problems of the organisation are their own problems and must be worked at by the members themselves. This also concerns the activities of each individual school. That is why a training of school leaders must be directed towards replacing the traditional executive attitudes which the leader of the school perchance may have with a problemsolving attitude. This does not, however, mean that a need for executive training can be entirely excluded.

At this point the question arises whether the training for such an executive leadership should be given by the training of general patterns of action or by providing a universal preparedness in the participators to design their own courses of action.

Should the training be a training of behaviour or should it provide a general preparedness?

Faced with a training of leaders the participators often hope to learn how to behave in different situations. They tend to want detailed models of behaviour. It is, however, obvious that the personal qualities of the individual leader, related to the conditions under which this very leader has to function, are of decisive importance for what should be considered an appropriate leader behaviour in a tangible situation. What the leader can acquire is universally applicable knowledge, skills and attitudes, preparing him/her for a personally formed leader behaviour.

Yet a behavioural training focused on various routines should also be included in a training programme for school leaders. There are many tasks and problems in the activities of each school which are non-educational and

which do not directly concern the people of the school organisation, e.g. clerical and administrative tasks. Such tasks can snatch away time and mental efforts which could rather be devoted to the management of the organisation.
Here, the training of routines could serve the function of relieving the school leadership proper of disturbances.

A school leader, ignorant of e. g. clerical routines could thus become that ensnared and even absorbed by those functions as to lose both time and interest in the real tasks of the leader. A training programme for school leaders must bring about that such a leader position is prevented not only by focusing on the real tasks of the leader but also by facilitating for the school leader by turning the secondary tasks into matters of routine. In a training programme for school leaders this should preferably be considered when confronted by newly appointed school leaders without administrative experience.

2. A TRAINING PROGRAMME - A CASE STUDY

According to a governement bill accepted by the swedish parliament in spring 1976, swedish school leaders will take part in a two years' training programme. This programme is accepted to be realized during the next ten years. The object of the training of school leaders is to contribute to a higher degree of goal-attainment than hitherto in each separate school. The training should provide an opportunity for the school leader to develop himself and his own leadership. Through this the development of his school will also be influenced. The training is meant to contribute to directing this development towards

- a better social interplay within school and between the members of the school and their environment
- a greater emphasies on both affective and cognitive development
- an increase in the inner democracy of school

The training is meant to clearly state the necessity of developing one's own school and the possibilities of doing it. People's need for security gives rise to demands that changes in their vicinity be carried out by themselves. This is why the training must stimulate the school leaders to encourage their colleagues to take a conscious and active part in the developmental work.

The development of leaders

Today we are more and more abandoning the traditional ideas of finding typical leading personalities and then equipping these leaders with various managerial skills. The personal qualities of the leaders are certainly of great importance. But nowaday other factors determining the role of the leader are becoming even more obvious: there is the value and needs of the cooperators, there is the purpose and structure of the activity and there is finally its political and economical conditions. Thus the training must emphasize the function of the leader in activating people to use their common knowledge and their common will to problemsolving.

Three aspects in the role of school leaders will be brought up in the training programme:

- democrativ leadership
- administrative leadership
- educational leadership

As the leader's role is dependent on the values and expectations of his cooperators one cannot hope for a lasting change in an individual's activity as a leader without the participation of the group members. For these reasons the training of school leaders must to a great extent take place together with the colleagues of his school. The leader's own reflections on his role must correspond to real changes of routines and relations to the cooperators in a mutual adjustment of expectations. This requirement will be an essential part of the training scheme.

The development of the activities of school

The two objects of the training programme, on one hand to contribute to the development of the school leaders in their roles, on the other hand to contribute to further the development of the activities of their schools, are interdependent. The colleagues must thus share the responsibility for the training of the school leader if this is going to influence the role of the leader. But this shared responsibility concerns to the same extent the development of the activity of the school. Most people tend to resist changes if they have not taken part in the preceding decisions. It is important that the school leader intensely works for facilitating the communication with and between the members of the staff at his school.

Here, it seems plausible to consider the following basic points of view:

- The situation of each school is unique. There are no standard solutions of their problems.
- When the school endeavours to accomplish this goals, one needs to concentrate on the ways of solving the problems of every-day work and on the decision-making process.
- The staff should be involved and this involvement should further their own development. They want to be appreciated, they want their work to be varied and involving responsibility. They want to be able to see the interrelations between the different parts of the general activity.
- In order to make a personal commitment, one needs to be able to follow the change of the organisations. Hence, the school system must be described in its totality and given some kind of structure. For the furthering of a positive development it is important that the following fields are covered:

The organisation of the activity - Finding forms for the distribution of work, responsibility and resources. Improving the channels of information and the mechanisms of cooperation.

Social development - Finding working methods for the pupils which satisfy the social as well as the cognitive objectives, improving the relations between individuals and between groups, giving the pupils increased responsibility for the activity of school.

The change of the educational process by means of subject-matter oriented developmental work, educational planning and stimulation ef educational discussion.

Concern about individual staff-members: creating in-service training programmes based on clearly stated (behavioural) objectives; facilitating the working situation when demands on the staff are becoming too severe.

Cooperation with the immediately surrounding part of society in order to reach a more rational exploitation of resources, a teaching closer to reality and a mutual understanding between school and society.

The contents of the training programme

The school leader will reflect upon and work at three broad themes:
The environment, the conditions and the development of the school organisation.

School organisation and its environment

Under the first headline school leaders elaborate their own ideas of how individuals in the collectivity of school consider their own school activity as well as their general situation. This is done by means of discussions and by obtaining personal experiences from various special positions.

School leaders examine the basic educational views of their staffs as well as those of their own and compare these ideals with educational practice.

The mutual exchange between school and the surrounding society will be discussed. A natural subject will be how the school organisation should cooperate with other social functions. One will try to find methods for this type of cooperation which can be of assistance to the school in its objective of utilizing experiences made in the rest of society and then handing them on to the pupils.

Thus, the training aims at giving a deepend and up-to-date information about social and working life. School and consequently school leaders have as their main task to guarantee the democracy of the future by means of educating and developing young citizens. School must be a democratic system in order to teach democracy. The democratic leadership of school will be treated as a final topic. School leaders should be made to take a personal position about the meaning of the concept of democracy and they should reflect upon what dimensions of democratic leadership should be considered the most important.

School organisation and its conditions

The following topics belong under the second general headline: Human beings, objectives frame factors (i.e. delimitating factors such as e.g. resources, number of lessons etc) and environment. The relations between these four factors define the conditions of the organisation.

The topic "human beings" has above all a social-psychological content. The school leaders scrutinize their own attitudes toward man and their own ways of treating and reacting on other people. The causes for human resistance to changes are also elucidated.
The topic "objectives" will treat various techniques for analysing the goals for the activities of one's own school. Together with the staff, school leaders try to synthesize goals and motivations for the school organisation.

As regards the "frame factors" school leaders should acquire knowledge of them and then decide how their school should be adjusted to them i. e. to the physical environment, and to the organisational, legal and economic management of school. The emphasis is on the problems which may be caused by the frame factors taken separately or together.

At last the administrative leadership is treated. School leaders will familiarize themselves with and try to apply different planning techniques and administrative methods. The aim is to facilitate the handling of frame factors and to release resources for innovation.

School organisation and its development

The educational leadership carries the responsibility for developmental processes. Initiatives must be taken, attempts must be supported and changes achieved must be strengthened. In order to be prepared for this, school leaders must get to know and make up their minds about educational philosophies which concern school.

If a developmental educational process at school is to be maintained, it is necessary that all the people concerned are able to

- survey their school and the events taking place within it
- identify the problems
- produces proposals for solutions
- carry out the proposed solutions

Under the headline of "process of analysis" school leaders will get an insight into different methods of systematic observations. The methods will be tried out together with the colleagues during the home periods.

The aim is to make comprehensive estimates of one or a few aspects of the organisation of one's own school. On the basis of the results of the estimates one chooses together an important developmental work at one's own school which starts during the last home period during the elementary training.

Under the headline of "counseling processes" the school leader prepares his attempts to start developmental work by penetrating one or a few of the existing strategies for developing individuals, groups and organisations. The school leader's role as initiator of changes at school will also be scrutinized.

The methods of working of the training programme

All the school leaders of a Swedish "Kommun", a community or district, should, if possible participate in the elementary training. The training will start during a spring term and continue during the following school year, terminating during the autumn term of the third school year. During this period the school leaders gather for shorter training courses for a total of 25 days.

The most efficient training of leaders will take place in the daily work. The home periods between courses are consequently the most essential part of the elementary training. Then, the school leader tries out the observations, methods and techniques he has met with during the courses.

Sweden is divided in eight educational districts with their own educational team, which is responsible for the planning and executing of the training programme. This team consists of representatives for the school-leaders, administrators from regional and local school-authorities and politicians from the local "Kommun" which for the moment have their school leaders on education. In the educational team there are also a small group of educators which have the main responsibility for the education during the course-periods. One of the educators are the "chairman" of the total educational team.

The training-course periods

The educational team which are responsible for the training gather the school leaders to courses of two to five days. The working methods applied during the courses should themselves function as an indirect form of instruction. By trying several different activating working methods, the school leaders will become better fit for their own tasks of guiding their staff in the every day work. They will experience how the very choice of working methods indirectly contributes to, or counteracts, the accomplishment of an aspired educational goal.

The home periods

During the home periods school leaders will try to apply the essential contents of the training course at their own schools. The discussion and analysis of the prevailing educational subject matter may proceed in many ways: by means of individual studies, by cooperation with school leader colleague(s) and by various activities together with the staff members. School leaders also gather in their local groups in order to discuss and elaborate certain tasks together with their colleagues.

Documentation

The PLUS-programme (plan över utbildning för skolledare= plan of training programmes for school leaders) was presented to the Board of Education 1975-07-01. The fundamental standpoints have been accounted for in two reports. In one of these reports (1974-10-18 the aims and guidelines of the training programmes for school leaders are explored and in the other one (1975-01-17) proposals for the organisation of training programmes for school leaders were presented.

Furthermore, proposals for planning of the training programmes of school leaders have been worked out. The plan is adressed to the participators and the supervisor of the training.

In the general part of the plan (PLUS 75:I general part) a summary is given of the guidelines of the training. In separate appendices, the processes and the contents of the elementary training for active school leaders are described. (PLUS 75:II, appendix "Elementary training") as well as recurrent further training (PLUS 75:II, appendix "In-service-training") and the needs of newly appointed school leaders for basic knowledge (PLUS 75:II, appendix "Basic knowledge"). All of these documents are only available in swedish.